

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL
Current Handling: n/a

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PTQ9222

E7

PAGE 01 CARACA 03447 01 OF 02 240545Z
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/005W

-----428659 240545Z /25

R 231845Z NOV 01
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4034
INFO CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 003447

DEPT FOR WHA PDA-BYERS
INR FOR COZART
NSC FOR AMBASSADOR MAISTO
USOAS FOR DESHAZO
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/23/11
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PAGE 02 CARACA 03447 01 OF 02 240545Z
TAGWS: PREL, PGOV, SOCI, VE
SUBJECT: DUELING DEMONSTRATIONS AT EL CAPITOLIO

CLASSIFIED BY FREDERICK B. COOK, DCM. REASONS 1.5 (B) AND
(D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: ON NOVEMBER 22, A PLANNED DEMONSTRATION BY THE ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD) PARTY TURNED UGLY WHEN SEVERAL HUNDRED SUPPORTERS OF PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ INTERCEPTED THE MARCH NEAR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN CARACAS. THE COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION OF SEVERAL HUNDRED MVR SUPPORTERS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WELL PLANNED. FORTUNATELY, THE DEMONSTRATION YESTERDAY DID NOT RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURIES

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 19 AUG 2004 200400111

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B1

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END

B1

SUMMARY.

ADECOS AND CHAVISTAS FACE OFF

2. (U) ON NOVEMBER 22, A PLANNED DEMONSTRATION BY ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD) MEMBERS TURNED UGLY WHEN SEVERAL HUNDRED STICK AND BOTTLE-WIELDING SUPPORTERS OF PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ (INCLUDING, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, "TOMISTAS" FROM THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY) INTERCEPTED THE MARCH NEAR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN DOWNTOWN CARACAS. THE METROPOLITAN POLICE BLOCKED THIS COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION AND DEPLOYED TEAR GAS AND ANTI-RIOT VEHICLES KNOWN AS "WHALES." TIMELY POLICE INTERVENTION PROBABLY PREVENTED A MORE VIOLENT CLASH

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PAGE 03 CARACA 03447 01 OF 02 240545Z
BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS. THE PRESS COVERAGE WAS ENORMOUS, WITH BOTH RADIO AND TELEVISION OFFERING THEIR AUDIENCES CONTINUOUS LIVE COVERAGE. OF THOSE INJURED, IT APPEARS THAT MOST WERE REPORTERS AND CAMERAMEN COVERING THE EVENT.

THE MARCH WAS NOT WELL-PUBLICIZED

3. (U) THE AD INTENDED TO KEEP THIS MARCH, CALLED TO PROTEST ATTACKS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OTHER PERCEIVED ABUSES OF THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT, A PEACEFUL AFFAIR. THE EMBASSY ONLY LEARNED ABOUT THE EVENT THE NIGHT BEFORE. THE ADECOS ADVERTISED IT WITH ONLY SMALL NEWSPAPER ADS AND AMONG THEIR SUPPORTERS, WHOM THEY BUSSED IN FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THE PARTY CLAIMS ABOUT 5,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE MARCH, A NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS ROUGHLY TO THE PRESS ACCOUNTS. ALL THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THE AD PARTY PARTICIPATED, INCLUDING FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CLAUDIO FERMIN, SECRETARY GENERAL RAFAEL MARIN, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADER HENRY ALLUP, AND EVEN FORMER AD MEMBERS LIKE FORMER CARACAS MAYOR ANTONIO LEDEZMA.

4. (U) THE COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION OF SEVERAL HUNDRED MVR SUPPORTERS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN WELL PLANNED. CARACAS MAYOR AND CHAVEZ OPPONENT ALFREDO PENA, WHO CALLED IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE TO FEND OFF THE COUNTER-PROTESTERS, STATED IN A RADIO INTERVIEW THAT THE ADECOS HAD A PROPER PERMIT FOR THE EVENT, BUT THE MVR SUPPORTERS, WHOM HE CLASSIFIED AS "ANARCHISTS," HAD ASKED FOR NO SUCH

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PAGE 04 CARACA 03447 01 OF 02 240545Z
PERMISSION. HE BLAMED THEIR INTERVENTION ON MINISTER OF
INTERIOR AND JUSTICE LUIS MIQUILENA AND MAYOR OF LIBERTADOR
MUNICIPALITY (WHERE THE MARCH OCCURRED) FREDDY BERNAL.
BERNAL DENIED ANY RESPONSIBILITY, AND MIQUILENA LATER
RESPONDED PUBLICLY THAT PENA'S RESPONSE WAS "TRULY ABOMINABLE"
AND THAT THE ADECOS PLANNED THE MARCH AS A DESTABILIZING TACTIC.

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PAGE 01 CARACA 03447 02 OF 02 240545Z
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